

things were true, the information should not be confined to her ear, but the whole nation should be made acquainted with the atrocities. It was accordingly, in consequence of this Lady's suggestion, that Mr. Ramsay published an "Essay on the treatment of, and traffic in slaves." She went further still; her husband was a member of parliament, and one day at breakfast, addressing him by his name, she gave vent to these memorable words: "I think you ought to bring the subject before the house, and demand parliamentary enquiry into the nature of a traffic so disgraceful to the British character." This was bringing the matter at once to an issue,—no doubt it was something to have felt a deep emotion of commiseration for the oppressed Africans, and indignation against their oppressors. The slave trade was a common affair in the country, and men's feelings and views are, speaking generally, much affected by the usages of society. We say therefore, it was something to have seen through the veil which usually blinds the minds of men, and to have discerned the slave trade to be wicked; aye, and to have wept for the oppressed—but it was something of a higher nature still, to have proposed that all this wickedness and all this oppression must cease—it must be abolished, and that by the authority of the British Parliament, and yet this was Lady M's proposal. We would say therefore, that in strict language, the honor of the abolition of the slave trade belongs, under God, in the first instance to this woman. Others had thought and written about it before this time, but she brought the matter to its true bearing, when she counselled that it should no longer exist, and pointed to the tribunal where justice should be demanded. Sir Charles Middleton declined his wife's proposal. He said "it would be in bad hands if it was committed to him, who had never made one speech in the house;" but, he added "that he should strenuously support any able member who would undertake it." Some one suggested Mr. Wilberforce as a fit person, both by reason of his talents and principles, as well as his personal influence with Mr. Pitt. Lady M. now prevailed upon her husband to write to Mr. W. proposing the subject, and his answer was, that "he thought himself unequal to the task allotted to him, but yet would not positively decline it"—thus clearly proving that up to this time, Mr. W. had not formed the design of moving the house for a parliamentary enquiry concerning the slave trade, and that therefore the honor of this be-

longs to others rather than him. Mr. W. indeed, says that Lady Middleton's application "was just one of those many impulses which were all giving to my mind the same direction." And his sons willing to give the go by altogether to these "impulses" communicated to Mr. W. by other minds, says that "the real cause of his engaging in the work lay far deeper than any such suggestions. It was the immediate consequence of his altered character."—Now we can well understand that an "altered character" will lead a man to forsake sin and cultivate goodness, but that an altered character should necessarily develop itself in laying hold of one good measure, in preference to others of equal goodness, is not so easily understood, and therefore in the absence of all proof of a special revelation dictating to Mr. W. the abolition of the slave trade as that to which he was called, we must conclude that Lady Middleton's suggestion for "a parliamentary enquiry into the nature of a traffic so disgraceful to the British character," was the means which God used in leading Mr. W. in that line of duty which he was afterwards enabled so patiently to pursue. We think therefore it would have been more creditable, in the sons of Mr. Wilberforce, in reference to their father's memory had they been less tenacious in claiming what after all is only a worldly distinction, namely: that Mr. W. has the entire honor, both of devising and carrying out the whole measure of the abolition of the slave trade. In this work there were many hands engaged, and we think it is a more just view which Clarkson gives concerning the agency that accomplished the destruction of the slave trade in Britain, when he says, "that there arose in many places a spirit of general enquiry, without any previous communications, as to the nature of that horrible traffic."

It was in the year 1733, that Mr. W. first brought the abolition question under the consideration of the House of Commons; and in steadfastly persevering amid much opposition, tedious delays, threatenings, personal obloquy and danger; he manifested a character which, it is to be lamented, is rarely found in the world, we mean that of the christian statesman. At length, however the season when the fruits of Mr. W's labors had become ripe, arrived. He had persevered through good report and bad report, and now the Lords promise, concerning the doings of the righteous man is fulfilled, "all that he doeth shall prosper;"—the House of Commons by a